

STATE OF MAINE  
PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

Docket No. 1998-650

January 9, 2001

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION  
Inquiry into the Readiness of Public  
Utilities in Maine for Year 2000 Issues

ORDER TERMINATING INQUIRY

---

WELCH, Chairman; NUGENT and DIAMOND, Commissioners

---

On September 1, 1998, we opened this inquiry, pursuant to Chapter 110 §§ 1201 -- 1206 of the Commission's Rules, into the readiness of Maine's public utilities for Year 2000 issues. In our Notice of Inquiry, we stated our wish to ensure that all Maine utilities were as prepared as possible for possible Y2k events, and that they had prudent contingency plans in place.

The Year 2000 problem, frequently termed "Y2k" or the "millennium bug" problem, could have impaired some utility services if utilities did not take timely mitigating actions. Because of the large number of computer applications, relatively advanced technologies and embedded systems in use by some utilities in Maine, even well prepared utilities might have experienced minor failures in some elements of their systems.

The Commission conducted three public conferences at which senior representatives of Maine's largest public utilities and related organizations described the state of their readiness for possible Y2k events, in October 1998, May 1999, and November 1999. The Commission's Y2k website contained recordings and transcripts of those proceedings, together with status information on Y2k readiness reports submitted by Maine utilities and references to other Y2k information sources. The Commission Staff met with all utility sectors frequently throughout 1999 to assist utilities in their preparedness efforts.

The Commission actively cooperated with the National Infrastructure Protection Center (NIPC), Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) in the Department of Defense, Veterans, and Emergency Management (DVEM), and Maine's county emergency management directors regarding utilities' Y2k readiness, contingency planning, and situation reporting mechanisms. The Commission also participated on the Governor's Year 2000 Readiness Task Force, and communicated on various Y2k issues with the Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Utilities and Energy and the Joint Select Committee on the Year 2000 Committee Problem.

During the year-end Y2k rollover from December 31, 1999 to January 1, 2000, Commission Staff were present in the State's Emergency Operations Center to assist

DVEM/MEMA in assessing the status of utility services. Utilities' preparations resulted in Y2k having essentially no impact on Maine businesses and residents.

Similarly, during other so-called "Y2k critical periods" such as the February 29, 2000 "Y2k leap day" rollover and the millennium transition from December 31, 2000 to January 1, 2001, utility services in Maine were essentially unaffected by Y2k events. We express our appreciation to Maine's utilities for providing uninterrupted service during Y2k transitions.

With our intent to ensure that Maine utilities were prepared for Year 2000 events now met, we can terminate this inquiry. The Commission will continue to work with Maine utilities to ensure that they are as prepared as possible, not only for any continuing Y2k-related event that may occur, but for all events, whether human-caused or natural in origin, that may challenge the delivery of utility service to Maine consumers.<sup>1</sup>

#### **ORDERING PARAGRAPH**

Accordingly, we order that this Inquiry is closed.

Dated at Augusta, Maine, this 9<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2001.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION

---

Dennis L. Keschl  
Administrative Director

COMMISSIONERS VOTING FOR:      Welch  
   Nugent  
   Diamond

---

<sup>1</sup> On November 17, 2000, for example, we directed selected utilities to file with the Commission, for informational purposes and on a continuing basis, updated copies of operational contingency and emergency plans and procedures that apply to services provided to Maine consumers.

## NOTICE OF RIGHTS TO REVIEW OR APPEAL

5 M.R.S.A. § 9061 requires the Public Utilities Commission to give each party to an adjudicatory proceeding written notice of the party's rights to review or appeal of its decision made at the conclusion of the adjudicatory proceeding. The methods of review or appeal of PUC decisions at the conclusion of an adjudicatory proceeding are as follows:

1. Reconsideration of the Commission's Order may be requested under Section 1004 of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure (65-407 C.M.R.110) within 20 days of the date of the Order by filing a petition with the Commission stating the grounds upon which reconsideration is sought.
2. Appeal of a final decision of the Commission may be taken to the Law Court by filing, within 30 days of the date of the Order, a Notice of Appeal with the Administrative Director of the Commission, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. § 1320(1)-(4) and the Maine Rules of Civil Procedure, Rule 73, et seq.
3. Additional court review of constitutional issues or issues involving the justness or reasonableness of rates may be had by the filing of an appeal with the Law Court, pursuant to 35-A M.R.S.A. § 1320(5).

Note: The attachment of this Notice to a document does not indicate the Commission's view that the particular document may be subject to review or appeal. Similarly, the failure of the Commission to attach a copy of this Notice to a document does not indicate the Commission's view that the document is not subject to review or appeal.